



Tennessee First to the Top Monthly Update

April 2012

- **Standards and Assessments**— In early April, the state announced hiring decisions for the Core Coach positions. Core Coaches will lead the summer trainings for grades 3-8 math teachers. The first training for these coaches was held April 20th-22nd. On April 17th, the state's official Common Core website, www.tncore.org, was launched. This will be the primary site for communicating information about Common Core implementation. District leadership teams for Common Core have also been identified and the first TN Core email update has been disseminated to those teams.
- **Data**—Element level mapping of the P20 Data System is 95% complete for the Phase I launch. Data to be incorporated in this phase includes:
 - Labor and Workforce Development : Wage data
 - TDOE: Facilities, Student Demographics, Enrollment, Graduation
 - THEC: Institutions, Student Demographics, Enrollment, End of Term, Graduation and Lottery Scholarships

The technical specifications for the portal and the design of the staging site have also been completed. Data analysis and validation have also begun for the Phase I release.

The Early Warning Data System pilot was released on April 17th and will be open to ten participating districts through the end of the school year. The Department will be gathering feedback from district and school-based users throughout the pilot. THEC is also working to finalize a series of modules on understanding and using TVAAS data for pre-service teachers. These modules will be released to teacher preparation programs this summer.

- **Great Teachers and Leaders**— Registration opened for summer TEAM trainings on Wednesday April 18th. Department staff are reviewing applications and conducting phone interviews for the practitioner trainers that will lead these summer training sessions. District's submissions for the TEAM Flexibility application are also under review.

During April, Department staff met representatives from the Gates' Measures of Effective Teaching project about their research findings. Based on some of these research findings, TDOE is recruiting several districts to pilot the use of student surveys next year.

Teachers were given access to the TEAM data system on April 10th. The administrator evaluation module was also made available for data entry on the same day. Data entry of the 15% achievement measure was completed on April 17th. Additionally, the Department continues to provide support to districts regarding the entry of the 35% growth measure for

teachers in non-tested grades and subjects. Meetings with educator groups, including school services personnel, Pre-K, and special education, have also continued throughout April regarding both qualitative and quantitative measures.

Teach Tennessee applications for the 2012-2013 cohort have closed and Department staff are currently interviewing candidates. Recruitment for both teachers and participating districts is ongoing for the Distinguished Professionals project.

- **School Turnaround** –The Achievement School District (ASD) welcomed a Chief Communications Officer and Director of Facilities to its staff in mid-April. The ASD has also completed its principal hiring for its three direct-run schools, and teacher hiring is approximately halfway complete.

Legislation granting the ASD, the same authority as an LEA regarding procurement and hiring is expected to pass in the Tennessee legislature in late April. The second window for ASD charter applications closed on April 2nd, and those applications are currently under review by both internal and external evaluators.

Applications for the second round of grants through the Tennessee College Access and Success Network were due on April 20th. 41 applications were received, and awards will be announced on May 15th.

- **Local Education Agency Plans** –The Department received 42 amendment requests during the spring scope of work amendment window. To date approximately 85% of those requests have been approved with the other approvals expected in coming weeks. Common amendments were around ensuring resources are available through September when Year 3 scopes of work will be reviewed, and shifting funds to send staff to common core training this summer.
- **STEM**— THEC awarded 18 STEM Professional Development Grants to seven postsecondary institutions. These grants will serve more than 300 teachers in a wide range of school districts. More details regarding the winning proposal can be found here:
http://www.state.tn.us/thec/Divisions/fttt/documents/stem_rfp/2012/STEM%20PD%20Winning%20Proposals_2012.pdf.

The school and hub contracts for the three winning STEM proposals announced in March are close to being finalized. Recruitment for the STEM Leadership Academy at Oak Ridge is also ongoing in advance of the first Academy in June.